

# LAW AND THE MATERNAL IN *THE INHERITORS*

## BY WILLIAM GOLDING\*

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*The Inheritors* and the two human races in this novel will be considered in the present paper as a magnificent metaphor presenting a picture of the process in which the equilibrium between the law and the maternal is lost or regained inside the human mind, whether individual or collective. Lost equilibrium is often suggested by William Golding in his novels where the law functions as an exterminator of the maternal. When the group wielding such law tries to annihilate the maternal, the latter forcefully fights back, leading the former to destruction. In *The Inheritors*, the colossal ice rock suggestive of the maternal body, and worshipped by the Neanderthals as "Oa" the earth goddess, causes a flood, inundates the colony, swallows up the forest and smashes the mountain. In order for nature to preserve dynamic differentiation and subtle harmony, the law should never obliterate the maternal, and this is also true of human beings as part of nature.

Taking this point of view, and focusing on the character's inner consciousness, I will argue that the presence or absence of differentiation itself entirely depends upon the quality of that law which interacts with the maternal.

### I

Nature and human beings are originally depicted in this novel in such a way that from a background of apparently no change or difference there is produced dynamic differentiation. The following passage shows that Lok, new leader of the Neanderthals, perceives the various smells of both nature and humans, from the distant past to present, as indistinctly fused in the autumn mist or in the muddy path, yet each smell asserting

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its individuality and difference.

He[Lok] flared his nostrils and immediately was rewarded with a whole mixture of smells, for the mist from the fall magnified any smell incredibly, as rain will deepen and distinguish the colours of a field of flowers. There were the smells of the people too, individual but each engaged to the smell of the muddy path where they had been.<sup>1</sup>

Lok uses this same way of perception when he visualizes the figure of his friend Ha who he thinks has somehow got lost but actually has been killed by the new people. The following passage represents Lok's memories of Ha in mental pictures.

But Ha was with them. They[Lok and Fa] knew his[Ha's] every inch and expression, his individual scent, his wise and silent face. His thorn bush lay against the rock, part of the shaft water-smooth from his hot grip. The accustomed rock waited for him, there before them was the worn mark of his body on the earth. All these things came together in Lok. (68)

Each smell was accompanied by a picture more vivid than memory, a sort of living but qualified presence, so that now Ha was alive again. He settled the picture of Ha in his head, intending to keep it there so that he would not forget. (74)

Ha's figure is recollected in unremarkable, accustomed time and place, where every moment of various aspects of his past is successively conjured up, making the differences between them more and more vivid and dynamic. This keen sense of perception, which distinguishes in the midst of stagnant time in homogeneous space the genuine difference in constantly flowing moments that are heterogeneous to one another, resembles the perception of what Bergson calls "*la pure durée*." Bergson observes: "... nous pouvons cependant toujours nous replacer dans la pure durée, dont les moments sont intérieurs et hétérogènes les uns aux autres. . . ."<sup>2</sup> To the same effect, Gilles Deleuze observes that "groundlessness" illusorily represented as "a completely undifferentiated abyss, a universal lack of difference, an indifferent black nothingness," in fact

<sup>1</sup> William Golding, *The Inheritors* (1955; London: Faber, 1975) 25–26. All further citations and references are indicated parenthetically in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (1927; Paris: Quadrige / PUF, 1993) 174–75.

"swarms with" differences.<sup>3</sup> Golding accentuates this kind of perception elsewhere than in this novel. In *Lord of the Flies*, for example, the following scenes are characterized by the perception of genuine difference among undifferentiated darkness: "Darkness poured out, submerging the ways between the trees till they were dim and strange as the bottom of the sea. The candle-buds opened their wide white flowers glimmering under the light that pricked down from the first stars."<sup>4</sup> "The maze of the darkness sorted into near and far, and at the high point of the sky the cloudlets were warmed with colour . . . . Now streaks of cloud near the horizon began to glow rosily, and the feathery tops of the palms were green."<sup>5</sup> "At length, save for an occasional rustle, the shelter was silent. An oblong of blackness relieved with brilliant spangles hung before them[boys] . . . ."<sup>6</sup> The same perception holds true for Lok's use of figures of speech, most of which are composed of dynamic and powerful metaphors. As Paul Ricoeur points out, "metaphor is not an abbreviated simile, but simile is a weakened metaphor."<sup>7</sup> According to Ricoeur, the metaphorical "is" preserves the "is not" within the "is."<sup>8</sup> This tension between identity and difference creates dynamism, by means of which metaphor represents things as "in a state of activity," as "blossoming forth."<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the following description: "The arms of the clouds turned to gold and the rim of the moon nearly at the full pushed up among them . . . and the water was full of tinsel loops and circles and eddies of liquid cold fire"(43). "The sun will drink up the mist"(47). "The sky was a narrow strip above him, a freezing sky, that was pricked all over with stars and dashed with strokes of cloud that trapped the moonlight"(82). These scenes of nature depicted by Lok, who makes full use of all his senses, have this trait in common, that from a blurred, undifferentiated world floats up vivid differentiation always in a state of flux and becoming.

<sup>3</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone, 1994) 276–77.

<sup>4</sup> William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (1954; London: Faber, 1973) 62.

<sup>5</sup> *Lord of the Flies* 108.

<sup>6</sup> *Lord of the Flies* 181.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny (1978; London: Routledge, 1994) 248.

<sup>8</sup> *The Rule of Metaphor* 249.

<sup>9</sup> *The Rule of Metaphor* 307–08.

What makes the subject aware of this dynamic differentiation is “symbolic order.” Concerning the differential character of the symbolic order, Jacques Lacan observes as follows: “Dans l’ordre symbolique, tout élément vaut comme opposé à un autre.” [“In the symbolic order, every element has value through being opposed to another”], which means that in the symbolic order “every element” is heterogeneous to one another.<sup>10</sup> The symbolic order can be obtained, according to Lacan, by way of the law of the father — “the name of the father” (“the Name-of-the-Father”) or “*le nom du père*” (“*le Nom-du-Père*”) that liberates from the mother the subject still undifferentiated from her. Lacan asserts that “it is in *the name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law.”<sup>11</sup> Now that the primal desire for the mother is barred by the father, the desired object is always already replaced by something different. The “dynamism” produced by the tension between identity and difference, as Ricoeur observes concerning metaphor, actually results from this bar (repression),<sup>12</sup> which perpetuates the replacing process, thus creating an endless chain of metaphor and metonymy.<sup>13</sup> This is how the subject joins the symbolic world, the world of differentiation. Julia Kristeva, on the other hand, defines the elements that will threaten to destroy the symbolic as “the semiotic” appertaining to the maternal authority.<sup>14</sup> Since human beings first and foremost experience the maternal authority in the form of sphincter training, excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc) are supported by the maternal.<sup>15</sup> Such defilements are dirty and repellent but attractive, able to draw

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire Livre III: Les Psychoses* (Paris: Seuil, 1981) 17. See also Gilbert D. Chaitin, *Rhetoric and Culture in Lacan* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 36.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977) 67. See also Jacques Lacan, *Écrits I* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) 157–58: “C’est dans le *nom du père* qu’il nous faut reconnaître le support de la fonction symbolique qui, depuis l’orée des temps historiques, identifie sa personne à la figure de la loi.”

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *De l’interprétation: Essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965) 421–22.

<sup>13</sup> Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996) 187–88.

<sup>14</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia UP, 1984) 50. See also Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) 72.

<sup>15</sup> *Powers of Horror* 71

the subject to the maternal.<sup>16</sup> Should the law overwhelmingly exclude the maternal, the semiotic, the element destructive to the symbolic, would fiercely fight back.<sup>17</sup> The law therefore takes effect provided it is dissuaded from excluding the maternal authority. Lok's symbolic order is reared by the exquisite balance between the law of his father Mal, the elder of the family, and the authority of his mother, the old woman who embodies the earth goddess Oa. It is worthy of note that the maternal authority is as much emphasized as that of the father. Another proof of the existence of symbolic order is that the word "Oa" is composed of two phonemes. "Oa" is not only the title of the earth goddess but that of the wooden doll assuming the shape of a maternal body, which Liku, Lok's daughter, carries with her both as a talisman and a toy. The scene where Liku and Tanakil, a little girl of the new people, play with the Oa doll, hiding it in the cave of twigs, is suggestive of a child's play with a wooden reel which was observed by Sigmund Freud. The child discussed by Freud expresses the mother's departure and return by alternately hiding and producing a wooden reel. This behaviour is thought to be one of the incipient processes toward acquiring symbolic order, since the child utters "o-o-o-o" ("fort") when the reel to which a piece of string is attached is thrown over the edge of the cot, and "da" as the reel is pulled out of the cot again.<sup>18</sup> The mother's departure and return are symbolized by the disappearance and reappearance of the reel, which are in turn symbolized by the two phonemes O and A (*ooh* and *da*). This symbolic shift "from the mother to the reel and finally to language" is "the inaugural moment of all future displacement, all metaphors and all language."<sup>19</sup> This is how the child enters the symbolic world. According to Freud, the aforesaid child also "found a method of making *himself* disappear" because "he had discovered his reflection in a full-length mirror," and "by crouching down he could make his mirror-image 'gone'."<sup>20</sup> He was one and a half years old at that time, an age which is toward the end of "the mirror stage," as well as the transitional period toward the symbolic

<sup>16</sup> *Powers of Horror* 54

<sup>17</sup> *Revolution in Poetic Language* 83

<sup>18</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961) 8-11.

<sup>19</sup> Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (1977; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982) 52.

<sup>20</sup> *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 9n.

world. "The mirror stage" ("le stade du miroir") is the period to which infants aged six to eighteen months belong. At the end of this period they grow out of the fusion with the mother and finally become able to identify the self image reflected in the mirror.<sup>21</sup> As Lacan observes, "this moment in which the mirror-stage comes to an end inaugurates . . . the dialectic that will henceforth link the *I* to socially elaborate situations."<sup>22</sup> The mirror stage is therefore a turning point at which the infants step into the world of symbolic order and law.

Thus, the two phonemes O and A in the word "Oa" imply the world of symbolic order and the law of the father. Oa is *Gaea Mater* out of whom the symbolic world is produced so long as O and A are clearly articulated. When Lok, accompanied by Fa, first visits the caverns of the ice women, Oa's sanctuary, to offer the goddess the parcel of meat as tribute, with a view to curing Mal of disease, Fa's whisper "Oa Oa Oa" bounds back from the ice walls and reverberates like "A" or "Aaaa" without articulation. These sounds rise "like water in a tidal pool" (83), almost drowning him. Ice women's "water" is "seeping down between the rock and the ice" (84). At this, Lok suddenly feels sick and deserts the place, with Fa leading him out. Thus, the reverberation of "A" or "Aaaa," as counterpart of "*da*," has the uncanniness of the maternal ever present and engulfing the subject. In order for Lok to maintain the symbolic order, there must needs be clear distinction between the two phonemes O and A.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Écrits I* 89–97.

<sup>22</sup> *Écrits: A Selection* 5. See also *Écrits I* 95: "Ce moment où s'achève le stade du miroir inaugure . . . la dialectique qui dès lors lie le *je* à des situations socialement élaborées."

<sup>23</sup> As for the origin of the appellation "Oa," there have been two main theories. According to one theory, just as God is called "the beginning and the end," so also could this mother goddess be named "Alpha and Omega" ("Ao"), but the Neanderthals' lack of time consciousness or causality inverts this order, hence "Omega and Alpha" ("Oa"). See Robert O. Evans, "The Inheritors: Some Inversions," *William Golding: Some Critical Considerations*, ed. Jack I. Biles and Robert O. Evans (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1978) 93. The other theory is that time will end for the Neanderthals but is renewed for the new people, so it is put in reverse order: "Omega and Alpha" ("Oa"). See Philip Redpath, *William Golding: A Structural Reading of his Fiction* (London: Vision, 1986) 91. Neither of these theories however alludes to the phonemes O and A, let alone explain Lok's uncanny sickness and fear at the sounds "A" or "Aaaa." Moreover, neither of them ever touches upon the implication of Liku's play with the Oa doll, a symbol of the mother. This is why these two theories do not seem to be persuasive, at least in relation to the origin of the appellation of "Oa."

## II

In the meantime, Mal dies of the disease caused by falling into the water, the log bridge having been stolen by the new people. The law of the father suffers, and so does the maternal authority. The new people invade the Neanderthals' living environment, and the new law excludes the maternal when Lok's mother, the incarnation of Oa, is slain and washed away down the river. Those who adhere to the law that completely rejects the maternal authority are properly counterattacked by the semiotic, the element destructive to the symbolic. A community devoid of symbolic order is necessarily lacking in differentiation. Such a community tends to breed dislocation and violence, since social order depends upon real diversity and differences of individuals of the community.<sup>24</sup> Once fallen into disorder, the whole group tries to restore solidarity by persecuting or obliterating the supposed troublemaker that is identified with the element destructive to the symbolic. This scapegoat is wrought either by sheer accident or by some sign. As for the sign, René Girard notes: "A possible target need only be slightly more attractive than others for the whole group suddenly to come together in total agreement without the slightest feeling of doubt or contradiction."<sup>25</sup> The target for collective violence is therefore "not based on anything specific."<sup>26</sup> Any community or any individual is equally likely to become a sacrificial offering. There is no reason why Lok's family are being exterminated as "devils" by the new people. Nor could we read from this text any definite grounds on which Pine-tree out of all members of the new people must have one of his fingers chopped off for a special offering to the stag-god. To put it in a nutshell, they are gratuitously chosen as scapegoats. Furthermore, the very brutality inflicted upon them is thoroughly legitimized in the new people's mysterious and grotesque ritual. The ultimate case in which ritual conceals brutality can be witnessed in the orgy of roasting Liku. This victimization, one of the most outrageous scenes in Golding's novels, is so elaborately wrapped up in the orgiastic ritual that the ordinary reader

<sup>24</sup> René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (1986; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 13-15.

<sup>25</sup> *The Scapegoat* 86.

<sup>26</sup> *The Scapegoat* 86.

can hardly detect it. The fact that Liku is roasted and cannibalized in a feast which the new people enjoy to the full is only retroactively understood when Lok, having had almost all the family killed, sniffs the earth and picks up a small, white bone from under the ashes of the fire. And yet, however skillfully modified by the ritualistic banquet, violence inflicted upon the scapegoat gathers its strength and rebounds against the party concerned, since the scapegoat is an externalized form of the semiotic. Against this strengthening of the resisting power of the semiotic are pitted more sacrificial victims, with the result that the semiotic escalates its power even further. This vicious circle drives the party to collapse. So far from restoring the solidarity, the new people's society falls into more and more inextricable confusion as the number of victims increases, until Tanakil, the little girl of their group, comes near to being roasted in the same way as Liku. Concerning the adverse effect of sacrificial victims, Kristeva argues: "... sacred murder[sacrifice] merely points to the violence that was *confined* within sacrifice so as to found social order. ... Nevertheless ... a certain practice accompanies sacrifice. Through, with, and despite the positing of sacrifice, this practice deploys the expenditure[*dépense*] of semiotic violence, breaks through the symbolic border, and tends to dissolve the logical order, which is, in short, the outer limit founding the human and the social."<sup>27</sup> René Girard, also referring to this adverse effect of sacrifice, observes in much the same way as Kristeva: "In short, it seems that anything that adversely affects the institution of sacrifice will ultimately pose a threat to the very basis of the community, to the principles on which its social harmony and equilibrium depend."<sup>28</sup> The new people's law, we must notice, enhances the attractiveness of the semiotic. To the extent that the subject harshly excludes the semiotic by means of sacrificial offering, to that extent the subject is compelled to enjoy the very attractiveness of the semiotic. The law of this sort is, according to Lacan, at once the law of prohibition in the Kantian categorical imperative, and at the same time the law of the "will-to-enjoy" ("*volonté de jouissance*") in Sade's "Supreme Being-in-Evil."<sup>29</sup> It could safely be said that the new people's behaviour after the roasting of Liku is

<sup>27</sup> *Revolution in Poetic Language* 78–79.

<sup>28</sup> René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (1977; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) 49.

<sup>29</sup> *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 201.



entirely at the mercy of this "will-to-enjoy." It is just because of the accelerating spread of the semiotic in their minds that Lok feels both fear and attraction toward these people. He likens them to "water" and says to himself: "The other people . . . were like water that at once horrifies and at the same time dares and invites a man to go near it"(126). In due course, Lok and Fa find themselves imbued with the semiotic and dominated by the "will-to-enjoy" when they get so much intoxicated with drink brewed by the new people that Lok blurts out, "I am one of the new people"(204). Above all, the unusual excitement Lok experiences when he peeps through the foliage at every movement of bestial copulation of the new people, Tuami and Vivani, amidst the conglomeration of fury, nausea and the flesh, suggests that he falls into the trap of the Oedipal triangle in his desire for Vivani. Without any resort to the law of the father, which could liberate him, he is engulfed by the maternal. The symptom of Lok's symbolic order coming to a crisis is already witnessed in the scene where his mother is killed and carried away by the torrent. His eyes reflected on the surface and his mother's under water momentarily converge:

Lok saw her face to face and eye to eye, close. She was ignoring the injuries to her body, her mouth was open, the tongue showing and the specks of dirt were circling slowly in and out as though it had been nothing but a hole in a stone. Her eyes swept across the bushes, across his face, looked through him without seeing him, rolled away and were gone. (109)

This state of mind is none other than the consciousness of six-month-old infants who have a narcissistic interest in their mirror image, but are unable to differentiate between their own image and that of their mother. Lacan refers to this phase of infant development as "the imaginary" and defines its essence as "a dual relationship, a reduplication in the mirror, an immediate opposition between consciousness and its other in which each term becomes its opposite and is lost in the play of the reflections."<sup>30</sup> At the age of about eighteen months, infants begin to distinguish their own image from others. The period of one year from the phase of the imaginary to the incipience of symbolic order is, as mentioned before, defined as the mirror stage. The end of this stage coincides with the

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<sup>30</sup> Lemaire 60.

opening of "the Oedipus" ("l'*Œdipe*"),<sup>31</sup> where the father liberates the infant from its desire for the mother, i.e., both the mother and the infant break themselves away from a hitherto inseparable unity. This intervention of the father's is the primary law for the child — the Name-of-the-Father. Lok's present mentality therefore shows signs of regressing to the earliest period of the mirror stage. According to Lacan, the mirror stage and the Oedipal triangle are of interest to him because they have a timeless structure and are therefore not necessarily located in any specific time in the child.<sup>32</sup>

With Lok's symbolic order at stake, the natural world gradually loses its subtle differences:

The trail had changed like everything else that the people had touched. The earth was gouged and scattered, the rollers had depressed and smoothed a way broad enough for Lok and Fa and another to walk abreast . . . . Fa looked mournfully at his face. She pointed to a smear on the smoothed earth that had been a slug. (198)

What explains more significantly the critical condition of his symbolic order is the fact that his phraseology shifts from metaphor to simile. As mentioned earlier, metaphorical value proves its truth when the metaphorical "is" preserves the "is not" within the "is," and the tension between identity and difference creates dynamic differentiation. In the metaphoric expression he has used so far, such as in "Fungi on a tree were ears" (194), both "fungi" and "ears" are born of Oa, and are therefore originally undifferentiated. Living metaphors are produced where differences emerge of themselves from this world of identity.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, when Lok, by using the word "like," says "The people are

<sup>31</sup> Lemaire 85–86. See also Joël Dor, *Introduction à la Lecture de Lacan* (Paris: Denoël, 1985) 102–13.

<sup>32</sup> *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* 41–42.

<sup>33</sup> As for Lok's metaphoric expression, Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor note: "The river sleeps or is awake, trees have ears, the island is a huge thigh, shin and foot, logs go away, everything is alive. So, here, the fire eats and dances, and the near-clichés suddenly reveal a freshness when we realize that we are in touch with a linguistic epoch, not only before metaphor has died, but before it has even begun to live as comparison. 'All their fires danced together' is said simply and literally. Metaphor is still the expression of identity. The light dancing in the eyes is not like fire, it is fire." See Mark Kinkead-Weekes and Ian Gregor, *William Golding: A Critical Study* (1967; London: Faber, 1985) 72.

like a famished wolf in the hollow of a tree" (195), the metaphorical "is" is reduced to the "like," which means that the metaphorical "is" gets lost under the pressure of the "is not".<sup>34</sup> Thus, the word "like" ignores the common matrix from which "the people" and "a famished wolf" are produced. According to Ricoeur, comparative terms, such as "like" or "as-if," dissipate the dynamism of comparison.<sup>35</sup> This means that the exclusion of a common matrix breaks the tension between identity and difference, and so vitiates the very differentiating process. As we know from the passage "... Lok found himself using likeness as a tool as surely as ever he had used a stone to hack at sticks or meat" (194), "likeness" is used by Lok in the same way as the rollers by the new people. For Lok, hacking at meat is ignoring Oa's dignity, which we can guess from Lok's repeated warning: "This is very bad. Oa brought the doe out of her belly" (54) at the scene where all his family wreck and dismember the doe to get its meat for Mal who is becoming debilitated by a fatal disease. Has such compunction disappeared from his mind? Not necessarily. Here we should take into account that his wife Fa consistently uses simile and ignores Lok's metaphors from the very first (47-48). It is not because Fa disregards the dignity of Oa but because she partially loses the sense of identification with Oa in respect of her stillborn child. It is Fa herself who convinces Lok of Oa's dignity while they visit Oa's sanctuary to give offerings. The notion that Fa has come near to uttering the speech of the new people therefore leaves much to be reconsidered.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, when Lok uses the word "like" he almost always "likens" the new people to something: "The people are like honey trickling from a crevice in the rock . . . . The people are like honey in the round stones, the new honey that smells of dead things and fire . . . . They are like the river and the fall . . ." (195). "The new people are like a wolf and honey, rotten honey and the river" (197). All these similes suggest that no longer is there any common matrix for both the new people and the series of natural things or phenomena to which they are likened, indicating that Oa does not bring the new people out of her belly. In the background of the shift from metaphor to simile in Lok's figures of speech lies the fact that Oa no longer functions as a common matrix which unites the whole world

<sup>34</sup> *The Rule of Metaphor* 248-49.

<sup>35</sup> *The Rule of Metaphor* 26.

<sup>36</sup> Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 101.

into one. "The use of likeness as a tool of perception," L. S. Friedman notes, "reflects his[Lok's] loss of oneness (Oaness?) with nature. In the similes that express likeness lies the recognition of a dissociated universe that can no longer be explained by spontaneous 'pictures'."<sup>37</sup> The simile in Lok's remark that "they[the new people] are like Oa"(195) implies nothing more than that the new people and Oa are dissociated. This also means that Lok himself is split up into two parts; "inside-Lok"("Oa") and "outside-Lok"("the new people").<sup>38</sup>

### III

The semiotic, which the law of the new people tries hard to exclude, as mentioned before, belongs to Oa the maternal authority. Kristeva presumes the existence of "the thetic" which makes the border between the symbolic sphere and the semiotic one. This border is, however, always attacked by the semiotic sphere. The law of the father(the Name-of-the-Father) always has to set up a new border by producing a new symbolic to sublate the semiotic. And yet, since the latter is never completely sublated by the former, the law of the father eternally creates variant symbolics. Hence the world of eternal differentiation. In order for the symbolic to fulfill its function, therefore, the thetic needs to have both toughness and resiliency.<sup>39</sup>

However, it is the case that the semiotic is often prohibited by the symbolic which takes the form of patriarchy or patriarchal religion.<sup>40</sup> The rituals of patriarchal religions are usually held "to ward off the subject's fear of his very own identity sinking irretrievably into the mother."<sup>41</sup> The sacrificial ritual held by the new people to exorcize devils is a case in point. What they regard as devils is the externalized form of the semiotic inherent in their mind, and so is the scapegoat which they arbitrarily choose and obliterate. To make the scapegoat or to build the totem with which to exorcize devils is none other than the complete suppression of the semiotic in their mind. These rituals are always carried out by men, particularly by Marlan the patriarch and witchdoctor, and Tuami the

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence S. Friedman, *William Golding* (New York: Continuum, 1993) 41.

<sup>38</sup> V. V. Subbarao, *William Golding: A Study* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1987) 29-30.

<sup>39</sup> *Revolution in Poetic Language* 46-51.

<sup>40</sup> *Powers of Horror* 90-112.

<sup>41</sup> *Powers of Horror* 64.

sculptor, while women are looked down upon as inferiors and almost subjected to men.<sup>42</sup> Here is to be seen none of that balance between the father's dignity and the mother's authority that exists in Lok's community. When such a law of prohibition with a rigid thetic tries to exterminate the semiotic, the semiotic violence "breaks through the symbolic border."<sup>43</sup> This revolt of the maternal makes the semiotic and the will-to-enjoy rampant everywhere, totally depriving both nature and humans of their differentiating function. Oa, the colossal ice rock in the shape of the maternal body, rapidly melts and swallows both nature and humans at a gulp. Those who destroy the maternal can incur self-destruction.

By contrast, Lok returns to Oa's belly immediately before inundation. The scene of his carefully digging up a part of Liku's bone and at the same time cherishing her Oa doll confirms that the father's dignity and Oa's authority revive and once again coexist harmoniously in Lok's mind. This is also confirmed by nature's embracing of Lok. Lok's figure embraced by nature regains subtle differences amidst undifferentiated darkness:

But the caverns were dark as though already the whole head was nothing but a skull . . . . There was light now in each cavern, lights faint as the starlight reflected in the crystals of a granite cliff. The lights increased, acquired definition, brightened, lay each sparkling at the lower edge of a cavern. Suddenly, noiselessly, the lights became thin crescents, went out, and streaks glistened on each cheek . . . . The streaks on the cheeks pulsed as the drops swam down them, a great drop swelled at the end of a hair of the beard, shivering and bright. (220)

Immediately after the above scene follows this passage: "It [Lok] pulled its legs up, knees against the chest. It folded its hands under its cheek and lay still. The twisted and smoothed root [the Oa doll] lay before its face. It made no noise, but seemed to be growing into the earth, drawing the soft flesh of its body into a contact so close that the movements of pulse and breathing were inhibited" (221). This scene does not mean that Lok regresses to the foetus and finally suffocates in the amniotic fluid. He is not swallowed up in the fluid but buries himself in the earth. On this

<sup>42</sup> Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 96. See also Bernard F. Dick, *William Golding* (Boston: Twayne, 1987) 37.

<sup>43</sup> *Revolution in Poetic Language* 79.

point I disagree with Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor who insist that Lok is a dead child who is swallowed back into the womb and "has failed to develop into the full shape of a man."<sup>44</sup> After the fashion of Mal's burial service, in which he is lowered into the hole with his knees folded like a foetus, Lok draws himself back into mother earth.<sup>45</sup> This type of burial is a traditional one for Lok's tribe who think "Oa has taken Mal into her belly" (91). In this sense Lok attains Mal's status and maintains the father's dignity. It is not Lok but the new people who are being swallowed in the inexhaustible amniotic fluid of Oa that melts with a roaring sound: "It was a noise that engulfed the water noises, rolled along the mountains, boomed from cliff to cliff and spread in a tangle of vibrations over the sunny forests and out towards the sea" (222). This noise reminds us of the reverberation of "Aaaa" from the cliff of Oa's sanctuary, which once caused Lok to be so afraid and sick that he stumbled and ran away.

Some members of the new people, who have narrowly escaped being swallowed up and managed to survive, row a boat slowly in the "untidy, hopeless, dirty" world (225). Contemplating the evidence of the affair between Marlan and Vivani, Tuami is seized with a lust for Vivani in the same Oedipal triangle that once trapped Lok. Tuami violates the law of the father and, ivory dagger in hand, makes an attempt on the life of Marlan. This scene has a lot of the same characteristics as one in *Pincher Martin*, where Christopher Martin cunningly attempts to murder his friend Nathaniel after having witnessed the consummation of love between Nathaniel and Mary for whom Martin feels insatiable lust, or as one in *The Spire*, in which Dean Jocelin's accidental witnessing of the liaison between Roger, the master buider, and Goody, Jocelin's beloved follower, results in his virtually spoiling Roger's life. It is because both Christopher Martin and Dean Jocelin violate the law of the father, with the result that their symbolic order is hampered, that they fail to grasp their self image reflected in the mirror. Martin cannot identify his own image reflected on the surface of the pool in a desert island elaborated by his hallucination.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Jocelin has much difficulty in discerning his own image reflected in a metal sheet.<sup>47</sup> But we must notice that for them

<sup>44</sup> Kinkead-Weekes and Gregor 112.

<sup>45</sup> Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, *The Art of William Golding* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1968) 57.

<sup>46</sup> William Golding, *Pincher Martin* (1956; London: Faber, 1969) 133-34.

the law of the father is not necessarily appropriate but rather degraded, for which reason they repudiate such a law. A prophetic death sentence Nathaniel passes upon Martin, and the clerical discipline that fetters Jocelin are far from the genuine law of the father. They are precisely the law of prohibition and also that of the will-to-enjoy. Frank Kermode makes a similar comment on Nathaniel as follows: "But Nathaniel is anything but a respectable saint; his religion has a seedy quality and it contributes to Martin's agony as well as shadowing it with some ecstatic alternative."<sup>48</sup>

Tuami, having witnessed Marlan worn out and sagging after the affair with Vivani, inveighs harshly against Marlan's fake dignity to which he has submitted himself: "What a fool Marlan was, at his age, to have run off with her for her great heart and wit, her laughter and her white, incredible body! And what fools we were to come with him, forced by his magic, or at any rate forced by some compulsion there are no words for!" (226) In this way, the criticism directed toward Marlan is none other than Tuami's self-criticism. As mentioned before, the law exercised by Marlan and Tuami maintains patriarchy, regarding women as inferiors. Tuami is led to extricate himself from such a law by Vivani's devotion to a suckling, Lok's youngest child, who alone has survived among Lok's family. Every movement of the maternal and the devil, both of which have been for the new people the externalized form of the semiotic and rejected as such, is now intently watched and cordially accepted by the whole crew with unprecedentedly favourable eyes:

They shrieked at the struggling lump. Vivani's back was arched and she was writhing as though a spider had got inside her furs. Then the devil appeared, arse-upward, his little rump pushing against the nape of her neck. Even the sombre Marlan twisted his weary face into a grin. Vakiti could not straighten course for his wild laughing and Tuami let the ivory drop from his hands. (232-33)

The above passage is of great significance as it describes the process of the restructuring of the law into one capable of accepting that which the new people have regarded as devils and repudiated — the externalized

<sup>47</sup> William Golding, *The Spire* (1964; London: Faber, 1974) 154-55.

<sup>48</sup> Frank Kermode, "Golding's Intellectual Economy," *William Golding: Novels, 1954-67*, ed. Norman Page (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1985) 62.

form of the semiotic inherent in their mind. Relieved of the fake dignity of his tribe, Tuami begins to acquire the resilient power of creating continuously the new symbolic to sublate the semiotic. It is only when he acquires it that he breaks the spell of the Oedipal triangle, which is implied by the dagger dropped from his hands. Moreover, his sudden wish to carve the living image of Vivani and the devil out of the ivory of the knife-haft, and the shift of his focus from the blade to the haft suggest that Tuami as a sculptor recovers his intrinsic talent of producing abundant symbols one after another. His mental processes, while he extricates himself from the new people's law and gains that of the father, is clearly manifested in the landscapes around him. At first, "the world with the boat moving so slowly at the centre" was for him "dark amid the light . . . untidy, hopeless, dirty" (225), which means he is still seized with the new people's law that repudiates devils. This scene however fades in time, to be replaced by the following: "The sail glowed red-brown. Tuami glanced back at the gap through the mountain and saw that it was full of golden light and the sun was sitting in it" (228), which is in turn replaced by this landscape: "Slowly the red mist faded and became a sail glowing in the sun" (229). Finally the story ends with the following passage: ". . . Tuami looked at the line of darkness. It was far away and there was plenty of water in between. He peered forward past the sail to see what lay at the other end of the lake, but it was so long, and there was such a flashing from the water that he could not see if the line of darkness had an ending" (233). The red-brown glow appears from the undifferentiated darkness, and suffuses the gap in the mountain with golden light. A sail glowing in the sun takes the place of the mist. The line of darkness on the water recedes far away, and the place occupied hitherto by the darkness is filled with resplendent lights. The line of darkness has no end, nor does the flashing. Endlessly undifferentiated darkness is being made into endlessly differentiated lights. In other words, undifferentiated darkness is the matrix of differentiated flashes. It is also to be noted that the landscapes grow little by little more dynamic, which is shown in these expressions picturing the landscapes in detail as they develop: "the boat moving *so slowly*," "*slowly* the red mist faded," "a sail *glowing* in the sun," and "a *flashing* from the water." And yet, this transition to differentiation and dynamism does not exclude the undifferentiated and stagnant darkness. Darkness is then no longer "dirty." These landscapes have the same quality as those perceived by Lok in the form of mental pictures or



metaphors.

#### IV

As discussed, dynamic, rich differences are born of the stagnant, undifferentiated matrix. Golding illustrates typical matrices of this sort with the Ancient Egyptian ship model and the poetry of Homeric recitals. The former communicates to us "the ponderous movement forward on one line which is none the less a floating motionlessness,"<sup>49</sup> the latter "endlessly varied and endlessly the same" (92). In this sense, the Egyptian ship model and the Homeric poetry are equivalents of Oa that yields dynamic, "endlessly varied" differences. The ancient darkness tightly condenses immemorial time, every moment of which starts flowing and developing itself just in front of our eyes, giving off lights of eternally abundant differences. This feeling profoundly moves the author when he observes the ancient relics: that copper chisel left in a quarry five thousand years ago which displays a living, untarnished shine, or those footprints on the floor at Tutankhamen's tomb which shut stupendous time up "like a concertina"(47). We could get a glimpse from *The Inheritors* of the author's emotion that will never exclude darkness as "dirty."

In the second half of his Nobel lecture, Golding makes a somewhat detailed reference to "a magic place" among rocks on the west coast of his country. In one small recess, the farthest down, which is revealed only when the tide sinks "more than usually far down" by a special interaction between the earth and the moon, live quite rare creatures that display mysterious, variegated colours at midnight "as if the centre of our universe was there." Such a spectacle is young Golding's most valuable treasure (210-11). This "magic place" also provides materials for the mysterious drama in *Lord of the Flies*, where the bright constellations and the luminous animalcula surround Simon's corpse on the midnight shore.<sup>50</sup> And then, what is it that the author witnesses when he revisits the same place after several decades' absence:

I have been back since. The recess — for now it seems no more than that — is still there, and at low-water springs, if you can bend down far enough, you

<sup>49</sup> William Golding, *A Moving Target* (1982; London: Faber, 1984) 54. All further citations and references are indicated parenthetically in the text.

<sup>50</sup> *Lord of the Flies* 169-70.

can still look inside. Nothing lives there any more. It is all very *clean* now, ironically so — *clean* sand, *clean* water, *clean* rock. Where the living creatures once clung they have worn two holes like the orbits of eyes, so that you might well sentimentalize yourself into the fancy that you are looking at a skull. No life. (211; my italics)

Nowhere in this too clean sand, too clean water, too clean rock exists the creature with mysterious and differentiated colours of many hues and shades which once fascinated the author in his boyhood. The matrix that keeps breeding the rare creature has already been excluded as “dirty” by some external forces. We might easily suppose that the image of Oa in *The Inheritors* vividly comes to his mind when Golding passionately rings an alarm for the environmental crisis of “our mother” or “*Gaea Mater*.”

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